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Luke 23:33, n.d

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Luc 23, 33.

More than 2000 years before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hung on Calvary's hill for the sins of a fallen world, the voice of the Lord came to the prophet Elijah and said: "Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord." XX Elijah went, and beheld! the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains. And after the wind came an earthquake, and after the earthquake came a fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice speaking to Elijah. When Elijah heard this voice he hid his face in his mantle and prayed.

My dear friend, today is Good Friday, and also to us comes a voice which says: "Go forth, and stand upon Mount Calvary before the Lord." Behold what takes place there! There too is a wind, an earthquake, and a fire sweeping over Him who is hanging on the accursed tree as the all-sufficient substitute for a sinful, sin-cursed and fallen race. The hurricane of God's wrath sweeps over him, the fires of God's anger envelop him. But later, when the hour of his death draws nigh, when he bows his tired head in great weariness of body and soul, when the rabble on Calvary's hill becomes silent in ^{awe} wonder, then we hear the still, small voice which whispers in our ear the great mystery: For you, for you, for your sins, the eternal Son of God, God Himself, hangs on the cross. Truly, we also ^{who are assembled here to do} may, with Elijah, hide our faces and pray. Calvary, the Mount of Sorrows, is the place of holy silence and sacred solitude. And you

my friends, have in this evening hour come away from the
noise and confusion of the world to spend a ^{few} quiet
moments with your dying Saviour. Let us then, together, go ^{once}
more to Calvary in company with the whole ^{Church} Christian
affix God to worship and adore at the cross of our
Redeemer. And if we but listen closely, we shall hear
voices, even as Elijah did, voices speaking to us in the
solitude of Calvary's hill. We shall hear the voice of the
prophet calling to us: "Surely, he hath borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows - he was wounded for our
transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." We shall
hear the voice of the great apostle: "I have determined
to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ etc." We shall
hear the voices of the members of the great Church
militant singing in a great & distant chorus: "All sins
thou borest for us, else had despair reigned o'er us."
But mightier than all these voices we hear on Calvary's
hill the voice of the Great Sufferer himself speaking
the seven sacred Words which have echoed from
his Cross down through the ages and have filled
the world with their glory. To these seven words let us
then also harken this evening in order that the
cross ^{of the Jesus} of Christ may stand vividly and clearly
before our eyes. The theme for our meditation
is then:

The Seven Words of our Dying Saviour.

The first Word: A few moments before the soldiers
had arrived at the place of skulls. They had
taken the cross from Septim of Cyrene, laid it
on the ground & placed our Saviour upon it.
They had driven the cruel nails through his hands

and feet and had raised the cross into the air, until
 he hung between the heavens which had forsaken him
 and the earth which had rejected him. And in this
 position, the most shameful known to the Roman world,
 he lifts his thorn-crowned head and calls out: "father,
 forgive them," etc. O, my friends, let us hearken to this
 first word from the cross. The great High Priest prays
 for humanity on this Day of Atonement, the eternal
 Mediator between God and man prays for his
 enemies. "father forgive them" - forgiveness, forgiveness of
 sin - that is the ^{very first} word from the cross. That
 word, my friends, should be written deep, deep into
 our hearts for he prays for forgiveness also for us.
 To work the forgiveness of sins - that was the
 supreme purpose of his suffering on the Cross; in
 the full, eternal forgiveness of sins through faith in
 the redeeming blood of our Savior - there, and there alone
 lies the center of the divine plan of redemption. Over
 the soldier who had pierced his hands and feet,
 over the Jewish rabble who had cried for his
 blood, over the whole human race whose awful
 burden of sin he bears, ^{even all those} he spreads out his
 bloodstained arms and calls out: "father forgive them,
 for they know not" etc. - And my friend, can we not
 learn from his example? Can there any among us
 this evening who carry hatred and enmity in their
 heart against any man? O, let us look upon our
 Savior, who fully forgave his enemies! Shall we not
 follow in his footsteps?

The Second Word. After a little while he sees Mary, his mother,
standing at the foot of the cross and with her John,
his beloved disciple. He turns to Mary and says: "Woman
behold your Son," and to John: "Behold your mother." Then we
~~behold~~ our Savior as true man, the son of the virgin Mary.
Everything else they cruel rattle had torn from him,
his garments had been divided for his mantle they had
cast lots, his disciples had disappeared - no one was left
but Mary and his beloved disciple John. And these two
he now brings together and from that hour, the sacred
record tells us, John became Mary's son and she
became his mother. What a splendid example of filial
love and devotion our Savior gives us! O how
many children forget the debt of gratitude which they
owe their parents, how many children follow the
lusts and pleasures of a world rushing to its
moral ruin, how many leave at home an aged
father or an aged mother whose bitter tears must
flow because of the ingratitude and waywardness of
a beloved son or daughter. O my dear young friends, hear
it again beneath the cross of your Savior - bitter bitter
is the doom of that boy or girl who goes to kill
over a road which is washed by his mother's
tears, who stumbles over his father's reproofs, and who
tramples on those things which God has placed in his
way - a mother's tears and a father's warnings. As the
supreme example of filial love and devotion let us look
upon our Savior on the cross. In the midst of
horrible suffering he does not forget his mother.

The Third Word: Soon after the second word the malefactor hanging on the cross to the right turns his head to Jesus and says: "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And our Saviour turns to him and says: "Verily, verily, I say unto ^{thee} today thou shalt be with me in Paradise." In the midst of the mocking soldiers, before the scoffing Pharisees, before the howling mob, the malefactor had repented of his sins. He had recognized in Jesus the dying King of Kings, the King of the kingdom of heaven. And this King now turned to him and spoke the wonderful words: "Verily, verily" etc. Paradise - what a sweet word here in the place of skulls. Ever since the second chapter of the Bible it had disappeared, Paradise had been lost - until it sounds forth again here from the mouth of him who has opened again the gates of Paradise and the portals of Eden. What sweet comfort for the Christian lies in these words! This Saviour graciously receives repentant sinners. may more, he precedes them to the gates of heaven and prepares a place for them in the eternal mansions.

The Fourth Word: Three brief words our Saviour has now spoken; one word as high priest, one word as the Son of the Virgin Mary, and one word as eternal King and Ruler of Paradise. And now ^{at high noon} a deep darkness falls over the earth and the shades of night creep over Jerusalem and over Calvary. The crowds in the streets become silent in awe and wonder, the soldiers under the cross stand quiet and also our Saviour remains silent. for three full hours, from

12 noon until 3 o'clock in the afternoon he suffers the most terrible
agony in holy silence. How bitterly he suffered during those
those long hours we see plainly from the fifth word.
After this long silence he suddenly raises his eyes to heaven
and cries out: "Eli, Eli" etc. "My God, my God" etc. On
this cry we hear the anguish of his tortured soul; it is
the agonized cry of the Lamb of God that taketh away
the sins of the world. "Lorsaken of God" - no human
being can imagine the agony of this soul as this realization
sweeps over him. Down to the last bitter drop he is
drinking the cup of God's wrath over the sins of
the world and yet, trembling and quivering, his soul
still clings to his heavenly Father as we see
from the words: "My God, my God" etc. And why, my
friends is he forsaken of God and afflicted? We
as Christians know the answer: He was forsaken of God
in order that we might not be forsaken; he was
forsaken in order that we might not be forsaken of
God and go down into hell and eternal damnation. O hear
it again, my friends, the old, old Gospel: He bore our
transgressions, he was wounded for our iniquities, by
his stripes we are healed. he was forsaken of
God that we might be with God through time
and eternity. Do you doubt your salvation? Do
you sens trouble you? Behold your Savior,
forsaken of God for your sake!!
The Fifth Word: From now on events move
rapidly. Crucifixion always brings on fever and in
his fever our Savior calls out: "I thirst". And
the soldiers give him a sponge soaked in vinegar.
What cruelty!! This fifth word is of especial comfort

to those of us who are troubled and bowed down with bodily pain and illness. And when the Lord visits us with illness and pain then we too may look to the cross and see how patiently he bore bodily anguish. Not a word of complaint comes from his holy lips; he merely says: "A thirst." And because ~~of~~ his bodily thirst he has quenched the thirst of our souls; his thirst on the Cross has prepared for us the cup of salvation from which flows the water of life sufficient to heal our souls and satisfy all our wants.

The Sixth Word: After the fifth Word Calvary becomes ~~more~~ more quiet. The soldiers stand in silent wonder and watch the person on the cross in the centre; they can see that his life is ebbing fast; his soul is preparing to leave his body. And yet there is much more in these final moments than the soldiers and the crowd see. Before their very eyes the Scriptures are being fulfilled, the great Work of Redemption is being completed, and the long ~~regiment~~ ^{regiment} which has covered the human race for 4000 years is being lifted. As if to symbolize all this the evening sun now breaks through the darkness over Calvary and casts its golden rays on the three crosses. In the rays of this setting sun our ^{dying} Saviour raises his head once more and speaks the greatest Word from the Cross - the word: "It is finished."

This word is his song of victory, his cry of triumph; it is the great Amen of this redemptive work. Hanging on the cross our Saviour turned back and looked down through the ages to the first sinners at the gates of Paradise Lost; he turned forward

to the future and looked upon the last sinners to be born
on this earth and blessed the Atonement was sufficient
for all. "It is finished" ^{in cross} man is redeemed, the justice
of God is satisfied, the anger of God is appeased; it
is finished, man is freed from sin, death and the devil,
man is reconciled to God, the gates of Paradise are
standing open. It is finished — Completed is our cloak
of righteousness our mantle of salvation. With his
purged hands our Savior has worn it so that we
may now truly sing: "Jesus Blood and Righteousness" etc.

With this word, my dear friend, the cross on
Calvary's hill became immediately the center of the history
of the world and of the church. The cross has two
arms and it seems as though the one arm points
back into the past, the past which here at the
cross finds its glorious fulfillment. ~~the~~ the other arm
points into the future, points to all the generations
yet unborn who shall find beneath this cross
their wisdom and their strength, their salvation and
their peace. Yes, truly, the cross has become the
center of the world and its history — it changed
the history of the world, it changed the story
of the hearts of men, it changed time and
eternity.

On the history of the world we have three
great words which determine time and eternity. The
first word determines time, the last word determines
eternity and the second word ^{determines} the state of man
for both time and eternity. The first word is the
word of the Creator spoken at the beginning of
time, in the gray dawn of the world — the word

"Let there be light!" This almighty fiat called the Universe into being and as its sound went forth all the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The third and last word is the word which shall be spoken at the beginning of eternity by Him who sitteth on the throne of heaven: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." The second, middle word and the greatest of the three is the word: "It is finished." This word determines the fate of man for time and eternity. What more need I say?

How sad it is to note, my dear friend, that the world today carelessly disregards this word: "It is finished." How many churches in Chicago are today proclaiming the blood atonement? How many in this city tonight still believe in the all-sufficient atoning blood of the Savior? Only a handful - and why? Because, my dear friend, the words "It is finished" contain a deep mystery which human reason cannot fathom. Who can understand the love of God as revealed in the suffering Savior? Who can comprehend the wisdom of God as revealed in the bloodstained cross? No one - and the world today turns away from something which it cannot understand and speaks its senseless meaningless phrases concerning the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man - phrases which can have no meaning apart from the cross ^{and the blood} of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. - But to us, my dear friend, the word of the Cross is the power of God unto salvation and the word "It is finished" is the

great seal of the Son of God on the work of redemption. Even today the bloodstained form of the crucified Savior appears to a sick, sin-sick and fallen world and calls out: "I am your crucified Savior; accept me and be ye saved; reject me and be ye damned."

VII With the consideration of the seventh Word we close our meditation beneath the cross. The sun is slowly sinking and casts its final rays over the little hill outside the gates of Jerusalem. Once more our Savior ~~left~~^{once more he} his weary head, raises his eyes to heaven and cries: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And his head falls forward on his breast - The Son of God is dead. And the heathen centurion at the foot of the cross calls out in wonder and amazement: "Certainly this was a righteous man and the Son of God".

O, my dear friend, we can learn of Jesus Christ how to die. When our last hour cometh, when the angel of death hovers near us, when we too must go down into the valley of the shadow of death, then ~~may~~^{will} we too in faith in his redeeming blood be able to say: "Father, into thy hands" etc. And because of that blood, for the sake of that blood, which was shed on Calvary's hill more than 1900 years ago, he will take us home with him to Paradise and through endless ages we shall ~~join~~^{live} in the great chorus of God's redeemed: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches" etc.